

## Keep the Classics in Common Core

In addition to the three R's, we often forget that children learn about morality, ethics, and, right and wrong in school. In the absence of an ethics class (and that is not part of CCSS), the opportunity to discuss these things takes place during reading time. When reading fiction (and reading time has traditionally been mostly stories), children have an opportunity to meet exciting characters who are facing challenges, changes, and important events in their lives. Children identify with characters and their struggles, failings, dreams. Children of all ages love to hear stories. A good book inspires, invokes discussion and reflection, and gives us a chance to think about consequences. Teachers often choose stories with characters and plots that will lead to animated, ethical discussions. Did this character make the right choice? How would you respond to the challenges the character faced? What are the consequences of this character's actions? Can you connect with the character? What lesson did you learn from the story? Young children almost always instinctively know right from wrong. Reading and discussing fiction in school, with their peers and teacher, gives children an opportunity to develop subtle- yet critical- life lessons.

(optional)

**One story young students enjoy over and over, is the story of "Rainbow Fish". The main character is a beautiful fish with unique, sparkling gills that are speckled with gold and silver and glisten as he swims. All of the fish in the ocean long for just one of his scales and to become close to him. Rainbow fish believes he is better than the plain, ordinary fish and stays off by himself. One day, a small blue fish asks him to share one of his gills. Rainbow fish seeks the advice of the mysterious, old octopus who talks to him about the virtue of charity. After reflecting on the words of the wise octopus, Rainbow fish decides to share one of his gills. Rainbow fish realizes how good it feels to share with others and that making sacrifices can ultimately be rewarding.**

As children get older, the classics that they read are even more inspirational. Sadly, the Common Core State (national) Standards

practically eliminate the classics in favor of “informational texts”. They tell us that reading these texts will prepare our children to become WORKERS (the emphasis is mine) in the global economy. But, will we be producing “workers” who lack emotion and conscience? These standards have never been tested. Yet, we are told to accept that reducing literary study will improve college readiness, even though there is not a shred of evidence to back this claim up.

By high school, fiction is practically gone from the curriculum. In high school over 70% of what our children read will be informational texts. As parents and teachers, we know what our children enjoy. Reading informational pieces across the curriculum may or may not discourage our children from enjoying reading. Reading informational texts may or may not push a leftist anti-American agenda but, children do not become life long readers by reading informational texts. Nor do they analyze a characters actions and consequences from reading informational texts, for example. Most of what they read for pleasure is fiction. Obviously, there is a place for informational texts in the curriculum, but this shift is curious. In addition to the missed opportunity to discuss morality, both the informational texts and the fiction that our children are required to read seem to push an agenda that we may or may not agree with (global warming and more). Parents should take a look at the required reading. Reading fiction has benefits over reading informational texts that the far left ideologues who wrote CCSS do not want to remind you of. Reading fiction is an opportunity to discuss what makes us human and how we are all connected. Why would they want to eliminate that?